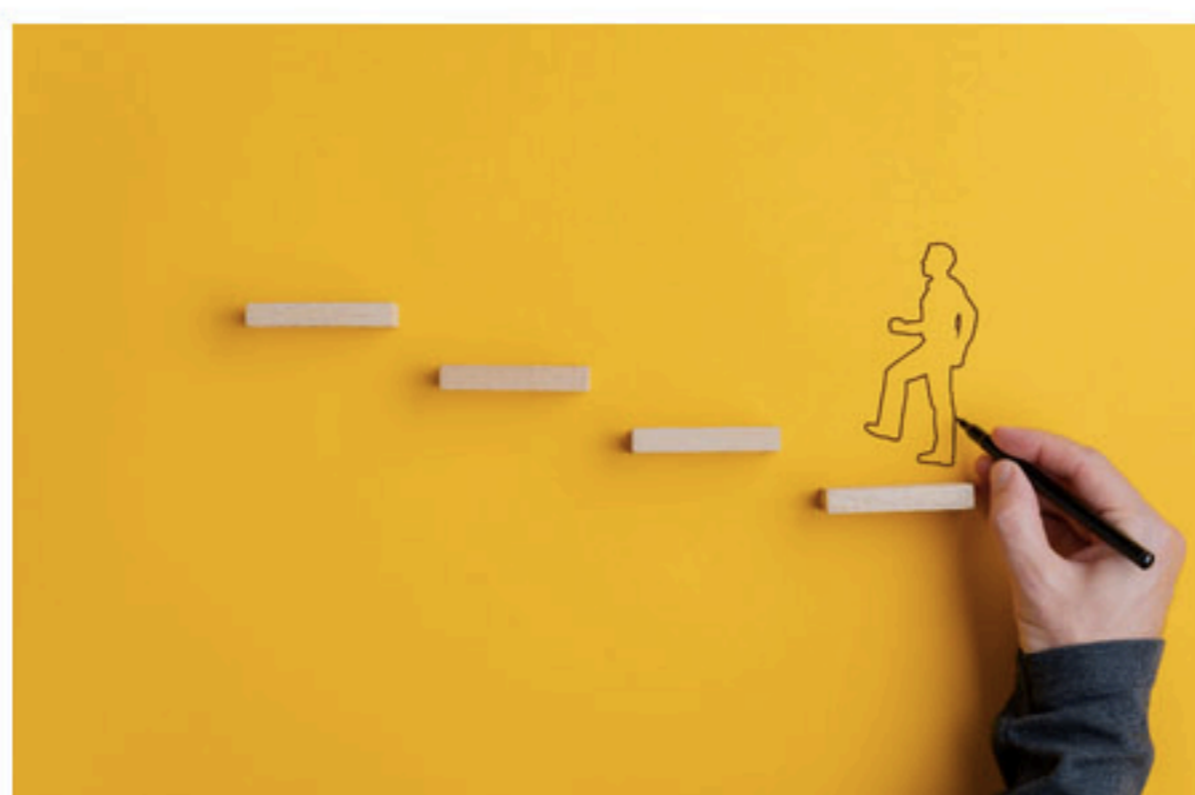


How to build a high-development culture in your company, step-by-step?

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The art of motivating people in the time of uncertainty and complexity.

Gone are the days when a hefty cheque solved all the motivation problems. As Jens Christian Jensen, IMSA Denmark, pointed out in [IMSA Search Top Trends 2020](#), a salary is no longer the main driver for the candidates. Companies – as a place to work – are expected to deliver much more for their people. So, how exactly should companies motivate employees and build a high-development culture in the 2020's?

Rapidly changing workplace vs. high-development culture

Because of quick digitalisation, every level of a company's structure is evolving so quickly that it is difficult to keep up. Technology changed the way people are communicating each other and with their superiors. This significantly influences the traditional worker-manager relationship. According to Gallup, while in the past employees valued a high salary, today having a purposeful job is what matters. The modern worker bets on self-development. The “coach” figure is much more preferred than the “boss”. The annual worker's review now comes in the way of ongoing conversations, focused on one's strengths. Only a handful of companies manage to meet such high expectations.

Gallup's most recent meta-analysis on team engagement and performance shows that, globally, 85% of employees are either not engaged or are actively disengaged at work. The outcome of the meta-analysis was published in the Gallup report “Building a High-Development Culture Through Your Employee Engagement Strategy”. Data for this study covers more than 82,000 teams — over 1.8 million employees — in 230 organisations across 49 industries and in 73 countries. The conclusions should be considered a red flag for most managers. Is building high-development practices so demanding? It appears so.

To help the management, Gallup researchers listed 12 steps to create a high-development culture in the company. We asked experienced executive search professionals, part of IMSA Network in different countries, to provide comments.

Steps to high-development culture by Gallup

1. I know what is expected of me at work.

“Nothing is worse than not having an idea of what you are supposed to do at work. It leads to immense frustration, especially when it comes to a newly hired employee, who needs to deal with lousy management,” says Alena Sanders, IMSA Czech Republic.

Nevertheless, a simple explanation is not enough. Gallup explains that the best managers: “paint a picture of outstanding performance and help employees recognise how their work leads to the success of their co-workers, their business area and the entire organisation”. Defining and discussing expectations for each employee is a cornerstone of building high-development practices in the company.

2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work properly.

For excellent work performance, appropriate tools are required. Although it is not only about accessories or equipment. To perform at the highest level, an employee also needs knowledge, software and office supplies. “The most effective managers don't assume what their team needs. They ask for and listen to their employees' needs and advocate for those needs when necessary,” we read in Gallup report.

3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

“It is crucial for personal fulfilment!” agrees Alena Sanders, IMSA Czech Republic.

Each person wants to develop their talent in a safe and friendly environment. A qualified manager gives each team member an opportunity to grow. “They talk to an employee about their unique value and make adjustments to align work, when possible, with team members' talents.”

4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Recognition is essential. It motivates, provides a sense of accomplishment and makes employees feel valued. Despite this, a valuable manager shouldn't just pat the worker on the back at every turn. In order to ensure proper recognition, the manager needs to “learn how individuals like to be recognised, and they recognise them in a timely fashion and often for achieving their goals and demonstrating high performance”.

5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

This step is tricky. One cannot be forced to care about the other. Nevertheless, the best managers respect their employees and can build a work environment where they feel safe experimenting with new ideas and sharing information.

6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

“In the fast-paced environment that is constantly changing learning and development are essential. Having a leader who makes sure employees are raising their market value is invaluable,” explains Alena Sanders, IMSA Czech Republic.

According to Gallup research, employees are increasingly focusing more on their development than promotion. As a result, managers need to learn how to coach employees “by identifying wins and misses, motivating them to go beyond what they think they can do, connecting them with potential mentors and holding them accountable for their performance.”

7. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Good ideas always remain valuable, whether coming from the CEO or junior specialist. No matter the position, everyone likes contribute in the decision-making process. According to Gallup, “asking for and considering individual input leads to more informed decision-making and encourages new ideas that positively influence business results”.

8. The mission or purpose of my organisation makes me feel my job is important.

Nobody wants to feel that their work is irrelevant. Contributing to a higher purpose, beyond the practical needs of earning a living, is one of the essential human needs.

9. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

According to the report: “Great managers do not stand by and watch their team erode. They establish clear standards of performance, hold employees accountable and foster an environment of excellence by recognising and sharing examples of exceptional work.”

“I think this may be the most important of Gallup's 12 steps,” says Mirtjahanto Adi Mitrono, IMSA Indonesia. *“To make the team stronger, the manager needs to build trust among its' members. Only then efficient teamwork can appear.”*

10. I have a best friend at work.

Facts are facts. Having a close friend at work can boost performance. “When employees have a deep sense of affiliation with their team members they take positive actions that benefit the business — actions they may not otherwise even consider.”

No one can fake friendship. However, managers can make an extra effort to create situations for people to get to know each other better and socialise.

11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Uncertainty is a killer of development. As maintained by Gallup: “Great managers have frequent conversations — formal and informal — with employees about how they are doing. In short, they are coaches, providing immediate, constructive and motivating feedback to help employees achieve increasingly better results.”

12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

“When employees do the same things every day without a chance to learn something new, they rarely stay enthusiastic about their jobs. In contrast, when people feel like they are learning and growing, they work harder and more efficiently,” we read in the report.

“I cannot agree more!” says Marianna Carbonari, IMSA Italy. *“The eagerness to learn is essential to build a high-development culture. If an employee is excited about possessing knowledge, a manager should support him in every way.”*

Are Gallup's 12 steps to achieving high-development culture enough? Not necessarily. *“I think Gallup may be underestimating the employees' deep need to understand the company's vision and long-term goal. From my perspective, everyone has to know the direction of the development. It is crucial,”* says Jens Christian Jensen, IMSA Denmark.

Nevertheless, the 12 steps remain a valuable tool that can help managers to change their approach and build a work environment employees need to perform at the highest level.